

Draft MINUTES
MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARMWORKERS BOARD MEETING
APRIL 7, 2004

The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Board meeting was held at 10:00 a.m. in House Room 2, State Capitol, Richmond, Virginia.

The following Board members were present: Kenneth Annis, Chairman; Mario Moreno, Vice Chairman; Kelly Robinson; Thomas Kellum; Richard Cagan; Sharon Saldarriaga; Tupper Dorsey; Richard Hall; Elisia Almendarez-Moore; Veronica Donahue; and Christian Schweiger. The following Board members were absent: Hart Hudson; J. M. Scott; Adrian Reddington; and Mary Bell Boltwood (on leave). DOLI staff present were C. Ray Davenport, Commissioner, and Betty Jenkins, Board Administrator.

CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. He requested that any participant who wished to address the Board give his/her name and organization.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Hall moved that the agenda be approved. Mr. Moreno seconded the motion and the agenda was approved by a unanimous vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Cagan moved that the minutes of the October 29, 2003 meeting be approved. Mr. Kellum seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

PRESENTATIONS

**Jim Reina, State Deputy Director
Telamon Corporation**

Mr. Reina distributed information and made remarks on Telamon's Farmworker Housing Development Program. He thanked the Board for their support letter regarding farmworker-housing funds from HUD and felt it was instrumental in securing the funds. He stated that in addition to \$399,659 from HUD, they received \$300,000 from Virginia. He said that projects were located on the Eastern Shore, Northern Neck, Rappahannock, and Scott and Dickenson Counties. He indicated that Sunnyside Farms would have the first units with a start date of July 10. He explained that straw bale construction, which can reduce energy costs by 50 per cent, would be utilized. He added that VISTA or AmeriCorps Housing Design Coordinators would be assigned to assist growers with the development of farmworker housing. He said that they plan to continue this program by applying for State Home Funds each year. He then responded to questions from the Board.

Mr. Reina requested that the Board send a letter in support of an additional \$300,000 when the original amount is depleted. Mr. Dorsey made a motion to send the letter requesting the \$300,000 additional funding and Mr. Moreno seconded the motion; the motion was approved.

**Shannon Bramblett, Migrant Education Specialist
Virginia Department of Education**

Ms. Bramblett gave the annual service provider report for the Department of Education and provided Board members a copy of the report. (A copy is available upon request.) She stated that the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* defines a migratory child as a child whose parent or spouse is a migratory agricultural worker who has moved to obtain seasonal employment in agriculture or fishing and has moved from one school district to another or from one administrative area to another with such district. The purpose is to provide high quality education for migrant children and ensure that they are not penalized by disparities among the states regarding such things as curriculum and graduation requirements. She noted that they provide services for about 3000 migrant children each year and are dependent upon fiscal resources. On a regular basis migrant children are counted and reports are evaluated, monitored, and given to USED.

Ms. Bramblett reported that currently Virginia is participating in a comprehensive needs assessment project and a migrant student records exchange initiative. She provided funding figures from 2001 through the present and added that Education has lost about one third of their funding. She explained that Virginia would participate with Kansas and Texas in two consortia opportunities, one of which is Project Smart, a distance learning curriculum. Her report also provided the Directory for the Virginia Migrant Education Program.

In responding to a question on a locality without a coordinator, she stated that ESL coordinators will contact her about a child located in one of those areas and she will have a recruiter sent to that district to complete a Certificate of Eligibility. She further stated that current district coordinators would include a child or those children in a locality without a coordinator under their supervision in order to be in compliance with the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

Regarding loss of funds, Ms. Bramblett stated that carry-over funds had been able to help in those areas where there were no funds available. She explained that they anticipate no carry-over funds in the next year and hope that those who have extra funds can contribute until possibly funds are restored. She said they hope that numbers will increase which would allow them to petition USED for more funds. Mr. Cagan questioned why the USED did not look at the numbers annually and Ms. Bramblett said she would have to check with Ms. Jamica Moon of the USED and would give the information to Ms. Jenkins to distribute to the Board.

INTERAGENCY MIGRANT WORKER POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Davenport called the Board members' attention to copies of the meeting minutes for December 9, 2003 and March 23, 2004 in the meeting folders. He added that Mr. Jeff Nelson of DMAS spoke to the committee and distributed a copy of DMAS' Interpretation and Translation Services.

AREA COUNCIL REPORTS

Written reports from Harrisonburg Area Hispanic Services Council; Winchester Migrant Services Council; LaRed Farmworker Council; Nelson County Summit; and Rappahannock Migrant & Seasonal Worker Council were received and emailed to Board members. (Copies of these reports are available on request.)

After discussion, Board members agreed that receiving copies of the reports by email was an efficient manner to obtain council information and asked Ms. Jenkins to email MSFW Board minutes and Interagency Migrant Worker Policy Committee minutes to all Councils to keep them informed.

Commissioner Davenport advised that minutes for public meetings could be accessed through the Internet on the State's Town Hall Web site.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Cagan commented that he still had no response to his letter of January 12, 2004 which he sent to the Secretary of Health and Human Resources Jane Woods about the formation of a committee to provide information and services to Virginia's limited English speaking residents. Commissioner Davenport said he would follow up with Secretary Woods.

Regarding the transfer of the MSFW Board from the Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) to the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), the legislation in the form of Senate Bill 363, has passed both House and Senate and Governor Warner's signature is expected. Commissioner Davenport said that he wanted to emphasize that DOLI totally supports the MSFW Board and the Migrant Worker Policy Committee. He further stated that the transfer was the result of budget reductions and that the VEC with federal funds was in a better position to support the work of the Board and Committee.

The Chairman asked Commissioner Esser who was attending the meeting if she would like to comment. Commissioner Esser reiterated that the transfer was due to budget issues and that with other migrant programs housed at the VEC, they represent a logical home for the MSFW Board. She added that they welcome the opportunity to work with the Board.

The Chairman related that at the annual meeting of the Frederick County Fruit Growers Association in Winchester, he was able to speak with Dr. Jim Holt, an economist in the Washington, DC area, and Ms. Sharon Hughes, the Executive Secretary of the National Council of Agricultural Employers. He said that Dr. Holt reported that no one in the Virginia delegation was supporting the AgJOBS Bill, although the Board had sent a letter to Governor Warner requesting that he encourage the Virginia delegation in

Washington to support the AgJOBS Bill. It was noted that Joanne Davis and Randy Forbes appear to be supporting the Goodlatte Bill. The American Farm Bureau, the National Council of Employers, and the Farmworker Justice Fund support this legislation according to the Chairman. Mr. Moreno felt that the AgJOBS bill would not pass. Ms. Saldarriaga mentioned that there were 55 sponsors from the Senate and 94 sponsors from the House.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM BOARD ADMINISTRATOR

Ms. Jenkins called the Board's attention to information she had provided in their folders. Concerning the next meeting date, Commissioner Davenport noted that the date would be tentative because of the process of transferring the Board to VEC.

The next **MSFW Board meeting** is tentatively set for 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, July 28, 2004 in House Room 2, State Capitol.

The next **Migrant Policy Committee meeting** will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, June 8, 2004 at the Department of Labor and Industry.

ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM BOARD MEMBERS

The Chairman reported that he attended the Region II (DOL, Philadelphia) Migrant Conference in Ocean City, Maryland and noted that the VEC was well represented. He thanked Commissioner Davenport and the VEC for their continued support of the migrant farmworker population. He felt Virginia's expertise in farm labor matters outshines the other states in the region.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Karen Speakman, Deputy Director of NCALL Research, distributed NCALL's Annual Report for 2003 and a paper on NCALL's Farmworker Housing Technical Assistance. She stated that NCALL is a non-profit organization serving the Delmarva Peninsula by providing comprehensive housing development technical assistance to nonprofit corporations and low- and moderate-income households. She added they were instrumental in the development of the Eastville Apartments on the Eastern Shore. Currently they are working with three nonprofit developers from Maryland, Delaware and Virginia. As of this year they are establishing a DOL grant for WIA 167 eligible farmworkers that will provide for up to \$500 for temporary housing assistance in rent, security deposits, and utilities. She asked for input on how these needs could best be served and hope to link up with local farmworker service agencies to enroll clients in Virginia. She added that payments would be dispensed to the vendor.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.